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TIEN FENG FOR 1955

Our readers will remember that in 1955 we were getting very little first hand information from the churches in China. In particular, the embargo on Church magazines was practically complete. Afterwards in 1956 and 1957 we were able to secure a fairly complete file of Tien Feng, from which much of the news in our Bulletin was drawn. Now the Missionary Research Library has secured a bound copy of Tien Feng for the last half of 1955. The news in it is rather old, but there are some things that are worth calling to the attention of our readers, in order to fill in the picture. This volume also begins with a Table of Contents for the first half year, thus showing what were the dominant interests in January-June, 1955.

That was the time when the writer Hu Feng was liquidated, and church people were all required to hold meetings to discuss the case. There are many articles, both in the first half and the second half year, dealing with this subject. At the meeting in Nanking Disciples leader Luther Shao admitted that at first he couldn't see why they should bother about a matter that seemed to concern only professional writers, but after further study he realized that the principle involved was of nationwide importance. Finally, however, in the September 5 number, the editor announces that they have so much material to print against Wang Ming-tao that they will have to stop printing articles on Hu Feng.

It was during this half year that Wang Ming-tao was arrested in Peking (August 8, 1955; see October 10, 1955, Bulletin). There is a tremendous amount of anti-Wang material in this volume, and it is evident from the Table of Contents that the barrage had begun in the first half of the year. Church groups all over China held condemnation meetings. There are detailed reports of such meetings in Mukden, Tientsin, Nanking, Tsingtao, Wuhan, Changsha, and many other places. These reports are made in a quite uniform style. First the date and place are given, and then it is stated that someone (often a Religious Affairs Bureau representative) outlines the case against Wang Ming-tao, and then one by one all the church leaders in that meeting who spoke against Wang are mentioned, and a few sentences of their accusation quoted. This manner of reporting naturally causes much repetition.

I could not find any place in this volume where Wang's arrest was actually announced. This is in striking contrast to Tien Feng's treatment of Catholic Bishop Ignatius Kung's case; big headlines are used to announce the latter's arrest and imprisonment. A number of articles also admit that there is widespread sympathy for Wang Ming-tao among the Christians. (It is possible that these facts are not unrelated.)

Issued bi-weekly to keep mission boards and missionaries informed on Christian work in China. Information from Chinese church magazines and other Chinese sources is passed on as objectively as possible, with a minimum of interpretation. When interpretation is necessary, it is entered in parentheses as the comment of the editor. ANNUAL RATES: Domestic, $2.00; Overseas, Firstclass $4.00, Secondclass $3.00. Airmail $5.00 in 15¢ zone, $7.00 in 25¢ zone.

Preceding the July 1954 Protestant Conference in Peking, a delegation of five leading Protestants called on Wang Ming-tao to insist on his attending the Conference. The delegation consisted of Episcopal Bishop Robin Chen, Methodist Bishop Z. T. Kaung, and Pastors Marcus Cheng, Chu Kwei-sheng, and Hsieh Yung-ch'in. Pastor Wang would not even see them.

In addition to the articles reporting accusation meetings, there are many articles by Christian leaders (Kiang Wen-han, H. H. Tsui, T. C. Chao, Bishop K. H. Ting, etc.) in which the charges against Wang Ming-tao are presented in more detail. These are: that he really is an imperialist, he opposes that Three Self Movement and tries to destroy it, and he hates Communism. These points are substantiated by many quotations from his magazine and other publications. One quotation that appears again and again is to the effect that the Three Self people in charging all missionaries with being imperialist agents were far too indiscriminate. They ought rather to analyze missionary contributions, admit what is good and point out where the imperialist elements lie. As it is, they confuse their church members so that the latter do not know what to believe. Actually, he says, much of what you call the poison of imperialist thinking is nothing more nor less than the word of God.

Wang Ming-tao's article on "We, Because of Faith Alone", which has appeared as an Occasional Bulletin of the Missionary Research Library, comes under frequent attack in these articles. The writers point out again and again that Wang's attitude is the result of his personal antipathy to Communism, rather than the result of any religious faith. (The reasoning seems to be: since our religious faith does not lead us to any such conclusions, no one else's religious faith could either.)

The severity of the attack varies widely in different articles. One medical student who had been a member of Wang's church publishes his accusation under the title "I Bitterly Hate Wang Ming-tao." (One wonders how a Christian magazine could accept such a title for publication.) On the other hand, Bishop K. H. Ting's article is much more moderate, and ends with an appeal for love and understanding.

Wang Ming-tao's influence was especially strong in the Medical College which we still think of as PUMC. There is therefore a spate of accusing articles from staff and student body of that organization, including one six-page article by Dr. Cheng Pi-ju.

The campaign against Wang Ming-tao had far-reaching ramifications. As far away as Canton there was a whole group under the leadership of Lin Hsien-kao who are described as followers of Wang Ming-tao. One of the articles against them begins with the editorial note that the information is drawn from a fortnightly magazine published by the Canton Three Self Movement, The New Situation. The nature of Lin's preaching may be judged from the accusation that he identified the Gog of Ezekiel 38 with Malenkov, and prophesied that Russia would join with Eastern Germany in an attack on Israel, whereupon England and America will attack and defeat Russia, thus fulfilling the biblical prophecy.

There was a very considerable upheaval in Nanking Theological Seminary over this question. A number of students were staunch supporters of Wang Ming-tao. They are accused of fomenting trouble, especially attacking professors of liberal theology, and thus promoting disunity within the school. Finally four of the ringleaders were expelled, and two others allowed to withdraw. A number of others were put on probation on their promise to reform.

Besides the very substantial amount of printing done by Wang Ming-tao in Peking, including books and pamphlets and his Spiritual Food Quarterly Magazine, a number of his supporters in Shanghai also opened a publishing office there. They wished to reprint the Spiritual Food Quarterly, but could not get registration permission for publishing a magazine. So they got around this difficulty by publishing the material in booklet form four times a year, but leaving off any date, just giving serial numbers to the successive issues of this Sacred Anointing Series. All of this is exposed in the December 12 Tien Feng, where it is stated that the latest Sacred Anointing volume had been published after the exposure of the crimes of Wang Ming-tao and Lin Hsien-kao. (Presumably this means too after their arrest, though again nothing is said here of their arrest.) The writer of this four and a half page attack on Sacred Anointing notes that the editor of that latest volume had not learned anything from what had happened during the summer, but stubbornly added interest to principal in his maintenance of the Wang Ming-tao position.

The history of the church for this half year also includes other attacks apparently unrelated to the Wang Ming-tao question. One of the most curious is a criticism of a True Jesus Church in Wuhan, where the church leaders had apparently attempted to cure a person mentally deranged by beating him.

A more serious object of attack was a group of Little Flock centers in Chekiang province centering around Chinghua. It is claimed that there was a "Chekiang Province People's Oppose Communism Save the Country Army", and that some of the leaders of this rebellious movement were hidden within the church. Chou Shih-lung was one of these, and when he was brought to trial, the situation was considered important enough so that church leaders were brought from Shanghai, Hangchow and Ningpo to see the evidence and convince themselves that the government had grounds for proceeding against him and his accomplices. There are several articles on this subject.

Another center of trouble was Paotingfu. A counter-revolutionary cell composed of Christian laymen was found concealed in the Public Health Department of that city, and four of them were arrested in September. In addition a traveling evangelist, Kuo Chung-i, was attacked for his activities in and around Mukden, and other isolated individuals in various places are brought under attack.

We have already referred to Shanghai Catholic Bishop Ignatius Kung. There are several articles "exposing" the crimes of this man and his colleagues. Another Catholic incident concerns a Catholic orphanage in Lungt'ien, Futsing county, Fukien, where the Protestant leaders of that county were brought together at Lungt'ien to view a common grave where the Catholics had buried many infants who had died in the orphange, and to join in the condemnation of their inhumanity.

Another instance of this condemnatory spirit occurs in the article on "New Life in the China Bible House." The second paragraph reads, "In the fall of 1954, the General Secretary of the China Bible House, Baen Lee, was arrested on a charge of counter-revolutionary activity. It was a shocking thing. Although the country had already been liberated for several years, and although the imperialist elements had already left the country, still the imperialist spirit dominated the Bible House, and attempted through this agent to continue its control, and thus continue to serve imperialism." (When it is remembered that Baen Lee was later released by the Government, with an apology for having wrongfully arrested him, this readiness of a Christian magazine to believe the worst of a Christian colleague, without any tangible evidence against him, cannot but be deplored.)

(1955 seems like a very dismal year for the Christian church in China, according to this report. There is a brighter side, reports of more constructive activities within the church, and these we shall report in the next issue.)

CATHOLIC NEWS

The drive to get priests and sisters to attend Communist indoctrination courses is increasing in intensity, according to the January Mission Bulletin of Hong Kong. This drive is a follow-up of the Catholic Patriotic Association set up last summer. The Government Bureau of Religious Affairs has recently made a report outlining a threefold government plan for the supervision of the Catholic Church by that Patriotic Association. It stated:

1. The Catholic Church in China is to be concerned with organizing political arguments and studies of current situations and government policies.
2. Bishops, priests and sisters are to implement the education of the people in Communism by learning seriously themselves, positively leading the faithful to study and encouraging them to participate in various events in social activity and production competition.
3. Time allowed for religious services will be used to propagate among the faithful the policies and instructions of the government and to help the government execute its policies regarding religion.

Many arrests took place in the closing months of 1957, under such charges as: proclaiming that Catholics must submit unconditionally to Rome; sabotaging the Peking meeting and the establishment of the Patriotic Association; saying that the Legion of Mary is not a reactionary